

Dave Nelson 3/1 Dave Nelson 3/15/52

I've had a very serious battle with Stage 3 Esophageal Cancer, almost dying 3 times in 2010.

Stage 3/T3/N1/M0 to be exact.

In 2009 the survival rate was 10-15% to make 5 yrs, statistically speaking.

I had retired April 28th, 2008 after working 36 years of electrical construction and contracting.

1.5 years later, October 30th, 2010, I was diagnosed with Esophageal Cancer having no symptoms at all. A routine test (upper endoscopy) and my life was forever altered.

I went through two 103 hr sessions of continuous chemo and 28 radiations in 5.5 weeks Which almost killed me for the first time after overdoing my physical activity. Cisplatin and 5-FU were the drugs. I wore a chemo pump which pumped the 5-FU in every 60 seconds. It tore my mouth apart so that my mouth and tongue were one huge open canker sore.

Talking wasn't possible because of it!

Trying to eat anything was excruciating!

I had just finished the whole regimen the day before I was stubbornly out chopping ice in the driveway which was more than my immune system could take given the extreme chemo and radiation. I wanted to show the cancer I was still somewhat in control. I barely had enough energy to walk, let alone tackle that project.

Big mistake!

That became my first brush with death.

On January 10, 2010, I ended up with 4 bowel infections at the same time. C-Diff., Typhlitis, and two more I can't recall.

My brother had rushed me to the ER and I was in a bad way.

I had an IV in each arm and wasn't gaining any ground. It was thought my esophagus and/or bowel may have ruptured. I wasn't expected to make the night.

About midnight my primary care Dr came in and was hollering, "We need more lines, we Need more lines!"

I was aware of all that was going on. As I was laying there taking all this in and hearing there was a good chance I wouldn't make the night, I got to thinking and finally told myself, "Well, Dave, you're gonna get to be dead a long time! Whatever's on the other side, it'll keep! You're gonna get there soon enough!"

So saying, I figured I might as well stick around on the right side of the sod as long as Possible. A surgeon was called in at 1AM and 3 more lines were put into my jugular vein and into the superior vena cava.

I then had 5 lines and 5 antibiotics pumping into me with another surgeon standing by to take my colon out. I survived the night and the next 2 days.

I then had about 7 weeks off to heal followed by a 10 hr operation at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, February 24th, 2010.

I had a complete Esophagectomy utilizing the Ivor-Lewis Technique. After the 10 hour operation, I woke up with 11 tubes coming out of me hooked into machines on a "tree" that went from the ceiling to the floor, all whirring away.

My identical twin brother and daughter were sitting at the end of the bed. (The nation

wide mortality rate for surviving this surgery back then, was about 20%. The death rate at MayoClinic where I was was about 3-5%. I don't know if those statistics are any better these days or Not. My surgeon told my brother this is one of the most traumatic surgeries they do to the human body at their clinic.

I had two epidurals in my back for the huge surgical incision they did, there, and an IV Pain pump in my arm for the huge incision on the front of me, both pumping Dilaudid into me for the 12 days I was there.

I was sent home with Oxycontin for pain which was injected through my feeding tube. I had to be fed by machine for the first two months. Nothing orally, at all. Not even water.

Unknown to us at the time, my body had developed a chemical propensity for Dilaudid and I was addicted in a very short period of time. The Oxycontin did nothing for me and so no pain relief at all. I should add that all the Dilaudid I received was mainline at the clinic and continuing that way through a PICC line in my arm and into the Superior Vena Cava above the heart for the next 6 months. I wore a pain pump pumping about 2-3 mg of Dilaudid in every hour from March until the beginning of August, 2010.

Mayo missed the Dilaudid addiction as did my hospital at home.

I ended up spending around another 75 days or so in and out of my local hospital in the 6 months after my surgery because of that addiction. My brother took me to the ER more times than I can count almost writhing in agony in his truck every time as the Dilaudid withdrawal pain was so bad!

Mayo was on board with my hospital 100% and all treatment and diagnosis was coordinated through Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. As a result of that addiction not being recognized, I was given dozens of xrays, and probably a dozen more CT's with the thinking being there was a surgical obstruction.

I've had a lifetimes + worth of radiation. Several ultrasounds, with dye injected, and followed on CT to track the bowel process looking for the obstruction that didn't exist.

We ended up going back to Mayo Clinic (430 mile drive) once by car and the 2nd time, July 26, 2010, in a 4 seater private airplane as I couldn't make the drive.

It would come to pass that these extremely extenuating and absolutely horribly painful complications were brought on by the drug, Dilaudid, and my extreme addiction to it.

We now know that I was addicted to Dilaudid before I left the Mayo Clinic after my surgery. Dilaudid is about 8-10 times stronger than Morphine and is basically hospital Heroin. This dependency wasn't known for 6 months and greatly complicated and impaired my ability to heal from this massive surgery!

The pain of withdrawal from Dilaudid is the worst pain and experience of my lifetime, I believe. I have NEVER been that nauseous and in that kind of horrible, horrible pain for about 13-14 days, in my life!

There was no let up. No eating, no sleep for that whole time! Just

EXTREME nausea and pain. I had gone from 170lbs to 140 because of the surgery.

TheDilaudid withdrawal caused me to lose another 22 lbs and I went down to 118lbs with my blood pressure at 57/40 at one point.

I was able to wrap my index finger and thumb right around my bicep. My thumb and

index finger overlapped each other. My hip bones were sticking out of my sides like dinner plates.

There was nothing left of me. ...Almost dead for the 3rd time in 10 months.

There are many that don't survive Dilaudid withdrawal, let alone both the surgery and withdrawal at the same time.

My new "normal" weight is about 135lbs or so for about the last 14 yrs.

It took me months and months to scratch and claw and bite my way back to life and Rebuild myself. It took me about 1.5 days to go 10 feet to my kitchen at the beginning. As soon as I tried to stand up, I would hit the floor, passing out, usually. (Severe Orthostatic Hypotension) I would be put back on the couch and try to take in a teaspoon of chicken broth. That's all I could take in without gagging as my stomach tube was still in its infancy. I must have gotten up and went down 10 times before I finally made it 10' to the kitchen with help.

I kept getting back up.

At one point I remember my mind trying to tell me, "That's enough! You gave it all you have and enough is enough! You're just going to fall down and pass out again," but somehow I continued to find the will to get up.

From the fridge, about 6' further, to my kitchen door after many more tries in the next couple days. And so it went. Countless times struggling to get on my feet and walk a few feet and then a few more.

After about 1.5 years I finally got up to a ½ mile walk that I still do 5 days a week, pushing myself as hard as I can possibly go each day. I time myself every day.

I'm ready to fall over at the end of this walk and I dread it every day as it's painful. I'm focused like a laser on living, however, and I do this to try and help mitigate the damage to my lungs caused by the massive radiation I underwent with my cancer treatment.

I believe the Orthostatic Hypotension, because of my treatment, is directly connected to my breathing problems.

My lungs and blood pressure were normal before my cancer treatment. I had one bout of Atrial fibrillation in 1999 and not again until the chemo, radiation, and surgery brought on 3-4 more bouts of it. I now have intermittent bouts of it.

Since 2011, I've done hundreds and hundreds of hours of reading about nutrition as it relates to the immune system. I continue to read and evolve and am focused like a laser on living!

I have ongoing daily digestive and breathing and blood pressure problems which can be pretty severe at times.

Having had a complete Esophagectomy, I have no stomach, per se.

My Esophagus was cut out and the top 1/3 or so of my stomach was removed, as well. My remaining stomach was made into a tube which connects directly to my small intestine.

The massive radiation I had has damaged my lungs, with heart problems likely to follow

I was told my heart has been holding up extremely well as a Heart Catheterization procedure indicated in 2023.

I was diagnosed with the upper end of Mild COPD 11 years ago. Since then, I've seen 8 Pulmonologists, 3 Cardiologists, including 2 trips to Mayo to try and figure out the connection to my blood pressure dropping after eating food and my breathing becoming extremely difficult every day.

My COPD is now diagnosed as getting into upper stages of moderate. I look at that as mechanical damage, however, and not cancer, and if I have to start hauling an oxygen tank around, so be it.

In 2013, I thought my cancer was back and that would mean less than a year to live as there was no more to be done for me with Western Medicine. As I had nothing to lose, I read 2-3 books on alternative medicine with Suzanne Somers book, Knockout, being one of them. From her book I compiled a list of 9 alternative clinics from across the United States and one in Tijuana, Mexico.

I was trying to be as thorough as I could, but also knowing I'm in a hurry!!

I called and interviewed all 9. I weeded out 6 and kept 3. Nevada, Texas, and Tijuana.

I sent all my medical records to all 3 and they all 3 accepted me.

Now what do I do?

I decided to Google and dig up any dirt I could find on all 3 and the clinic in Mexico was the only one that nobody had a bad word to say about so I said to myself, it looks like I'm going to Mexico!

The clinic is called the San Diego Clinic and I've now been going there for the last 14 years. I can't say enough about this tiny clinic and its small staff.

Dr Filiberto Munoz is world wide known for his huge success with a wide variety of cancers. I've seen Stage 4 miracles from all over the world in the 14 years I've been going to this tiny outpatient clinic!

As all of reading had led me to believe that the immune system is the key to everything, this clinic fit right into what I believe. I've had many vaccines made from my own blood while there (Autologus) and so it's 100% compatible with me.

I found it extremely ironic when, all of a sudden, 4,5 years ago targeted

Immunological therapies came on the market and it was a miracle! The ads were saying they're using a patient's own blood and targeted immunological therapies to cure them of cancer!

The irony lying in the fact that alternative medicine doctors and clinics have been using targeted immunological therapies to cure people of cancer for over 45 years with miraculous results!

Western medicine has kicked them to the curb all this time until just recently. It's my guess Big Pharma found a way to make a buck!

At first, it made me angry, but for some time now I've come to say, better late to the game than never.

This IS the path and it's about time!

As I philosophically thought about all I had been through, having been at death's door 3-4 times and surviving, I came to see that my new path forward should be trying to help other cancer people and now other conditions, as well.

For 36 years I worked in electrical construction.

That door closed, this happened, and now this is my new path.

In the last 14 years, I've mentored and supported over 60 cancer people and others which I didn't set out to do, but my life has taken this course and path.

14 of my cancer people have now died which gets pretty tough, but I do what I can to provide inspiration and an understanding of what they're going through. Very few have been through

worse than me and so I feel that's what I bring to the table. I feel that if I can be an inspiration or a light at the end of the tunnel for someone, then this is what I need to do.

Out of 10 people diagnosed like me about 16 yrs ago, most are now dead. (statistically speaking)

My reading has led me to believe that raw, plant based foods are vital to properly fortify our immune systems. My reading has led me to believe that the immune system is the key to everything with regards to good health.

What we eat is one of the things we DO have a fair amount of control over.

Sugar is basically poison, and is the root cause of multiple illnesses. I try not to take in more than 15 grams of sugar a day. (Mainly from my morning juicing concoction) From ANY source.

Cancer is a sugar feeder.

My reading led me to choose 19 organic vegetables (my juicing concoction as I call it) and some fruits to juice (blend) every morning, fresh, along with an exercise program I came with for myself. (Juice should be the first thing in your stomach for maximum efficiency) It really can't be stored as oxidation begins almost immediately.

A good example of that would be an apple when you cut a slice of it or take a bite.

Oxidation discoloring begins very shortly after you cut the slice. It's the same way with all the other vegetables and fruits in the juice. If they're oxidizing, they're losing their nutritional value.

I start just before 5am 5 days a week and the first 4-5 hours of my day is strictly dedicated to what I call my "Wellness Regimen."

I only drink 9.5PH balanced water and bought a machine to make my own ionized water.

As I said, I'm focused like a laser on living and am extremely disciplined in that regard!

I should also add that once I do my homework on what direction I'm going to take, I move forward with my mind on my side 1000% KNOWING that what I'm doing is the right thing for me to do!

I don't ever second guess myself.

I can tweak and evolve, but we MUST have our mind on our side!

The mind is a powerful tool, but it can work against us, too. I especially learned that during the horribly intense pain I went through with the Dilaudid withdrawal. That was probably the worst experience of my life. The chemo, radiation, and surgery were horrible, but the withdrawal was worse, I believe!

If I let my mind start to run with the pain, it would become more intolerable than it already was!

Although I continue to have daily complications with my blood pressure, breathing, and digestion, I'm grateful to be alive and life is good!

While I've become limited in several ways, I'm known to say that I focus on what I CAN do and not what I can't!

I've also come to say that birthdays are a damn good thing and I look forward to every one I have left!

And so, you'll find me leaning forward

Always leaning forward... !!

Dave Nelson